



## CHAPTER 18

# ELECTIONS OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

The elections office is often the smallest agency in local government until Election Day, when it often becomes the largest. The public might perceive that election officials “only work on one day of the year.” Managing an elections office, however, is a full-time job with some of the most complex responsibilities expected of a public servant. The most efficient offices produce the most successfully administered elections.

When not in “election mode,” an elections office handles tasks similar to those of other governmental agencies. Those tasks include data entry, processing incoming and outgoing mail, responding to telephone and in-person requests for information, accounting and payroll duties, staff recruitment and training, etc. As Election Day nears and the workload increases, however, the amount of available resources does not always increase correspondingly.

In many elections offices, administering elections is only one of the offices’ many responsibilities and duties. Many election officials are also the clerk, recorder, auditor, and/or treasurer of their jurisdictions. These multifunction “elections” offices face additional burdens because they tend to exist in very small jurisdictions with few full-time staff members and tight budgets. These elections offices in small jurisdictions still must meet all Federal, State, and local requirements for conducting an election.

Federal and State laws and local policies govern how elections are conducted. A change in these laws may have a significant effect on the processes and resources available to manage an election. The timing of any change in a law can also create additional challenges. For example, as discussed in the section on creating an election calendar, election officials begin planning for elections many months in advance. If laws change during that election cal-

endar, it can be daunting to meet new mandates in time for the immovable deadline that Election Day represents.

The logistics of managing internal office processes, managing facilities and equipment, staffing, budgeting, collecting statistical data, and administering an election are unique in public administration. Moreover, the programmatic expectations and budget vary from year to year based on the number of elections in the jurisdiction and they can be difficult to explain to budget authorities seeking to reduce costs. This chapter aims to help election officials implement the most efficient processes for managing an elections office.

The content of this chapter on was developed in collaboration with State and local election officials and other election professionals who have first-hand experience managing elections. The EAC is grateful for their participation to ensure that the guidelines are practical and applicable for jurisdictions regardless of their size and resources. The *Election Management Guidelines* and the *Quick Start Management Guides* are available on line at [www.eac.gov](http://www.eac.gov).

### IMPORTANT REMINDER ★ ★ ★

Jurisdictions are reminded to implement these voluntary practices only after reviewing State and local laws and regulations. Local election officials should contact their State election officials with questions about the legality of a specific policy or procedure in their State.

### Managing Internal Processes

Election officials must deal with some of the same responsibilities as public servants in other government agencies. All government entities should operate under clear and detailed policies and procedures to ensure accuracy and uniformity of service. Similarly, each division of the elections office

should have clearly written policies and procedures. Election officials also may be responsible for the procurement schedules and record retention for the elections office. Election officials also have the unique responsibility of preparing for an election. The following sections discuss some considerations for election officials as they prepare for an election.

### Policies and Procedures

Election officials might develop some type of Quality Management System (QMS) that includes written policies and procedures for all aspects of elections. These policies and procedures might include maintenance plans, testing, and validation to ensure that the entire office staff and the public understand responsibilities and expectations for various situations. The QMS ensures that all tasks are completed in the same manner by each staff member. Unifying internal processes is necessary so that every voter has the same experience when dealing with the elections office.

The *Election Management Guidelines* and *Quick Start Management Guides* include suggestions for policies and procedures for many different aspects of election administration. These topic areas include absentee voting, polling place operations, poll worker recruitment, training and assignments, early voting and vote center operations, canvassing and certifying election results, conducting a recount, communication with the public, provisional ballots, etc. All *Election Management Guidelines* chapters and *Quick Start Management Guides* are available at [www.eac.gov](http://www.eac.gov).

A complete QMS will include and benefit from work flow diagrams based on the written policies and procedures. These diagrams illustrate the processes for all internal and external activities. Some election officials encourage staff to develop these diagrams and then allow staff members from one division to review proposed work flows for staff members of another division. This collaborative opportunity allows all staff members to understand how their work affects the entire organization's mission, and it provides a chance for staff to work

### tip

Election officials can look for duplicated work processes and encourage staff to look for and identify ways that they can do their work more efficiently.

together to achieve efficiencies in programmatic responsibilities.

Succession planning is one of the main reasons to create detailed policies and procedures. In many jurisdictions the public elects election officials, which can lead to a high staff turnover rate. To avoid losing institutional memory when an experienced staff member leaves the employment of the elections office, election officials must ensure that clear job descriptions and chains of command exist. Cross training staff, the benefits of which will be discussed in the "Staffing" section of this chapter, in multiple areas of election administration also helps to mitigate the harm that the departure of an experienced staff member might cause.

### Procurement and Retention Schedules

As with all other public administrators, election officials must acquire, maintain, replace, and dispose of various pieces of technology, and paper or electronic records. Federal<sup>1</sup>, State, and local laws govern the procurement, retention, and disposal processes with which the elections office must comply. Election officials might include the procurement and retention schedules into their policies and procedures so that all elections office staff understand the process and any responsibility they have to complete the tasks.

Election officials are often responsible for acquiring and replacing technology used in the elections office and for voting. No piece of technology lasts forever, and therefore computers and voting systems constitute very large budget outlays for which the elections office must prepare in advance.

The technology manual, discussed in more detail in the *Technology in Elections* chapter, outlines how to plan for an election office's technological needs and capacity for the future. The technology manual's purpose is to document each technological aspect of the election administration process for continuity.

Election officials should understand State statutes and regulations concerning access to public information. The elections office might need policies and procedures for facilitating or denying requests for access to election materials.

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<sup>1</sup> 42 U.S.C. § 1974.

Election materials are usually kept only as long as the retention schedule mandates. Election officials might review Federal and State statutes and regulations for records retention for election-related materials. If the jurisdiction does not have a written-record retention schedule, the election official should establish one for the elections office.

The retention schedule can include a few different pieces of information including each record series, type of record (that is, inactive, permanent, or archival), storage location, and date to be destroyed, if applicable. The election materials to be kept include all ballots and electronic media used during an election.

### Disposal of Records

Election materials can require a lot of warehouse space. Because election officials are likely to store all of their voting systems, records, and equipment in one place, properly disposing of election materials can be as important as the space needed to store them. For example, after an election, officials are likely to need space to store those materials used most recently. Appropriate disposal of records, at the completion of their retention schedules, can free up much-needed warehouse space for the more recently used election materials. Disposal of records can be handled in house, by another government agency in the jurisdiction, or by a third party.

Documenting disposal is important. Just as election officials have security procedures for the printing, storing, distribution, retrieval, and archiving of ballots, election officials will benefit from a record of disposal clearly noting that the election material was destroyed pursuant to the records retention schedule. Whether the elections office staff is responsible for the disposal of materials or if the disposal is being done by another entity, a record of the disposal should exist. A ballot's chain of custody ends with its disposal after it has reached the end of the records retention schedule.

Election officials have different options for destroying records per the records retention schedule. The elections office in Johnson County, Kansas uses a third-party shredding company, which conducts all of the shredding at the elections office so that the ballots do not need to be transported offsite and outside the control of elections office staff. The elections office in Dallas, Texas stores all archived election materials at a county warehouse. When

the election materials near the end of the retention schedule, county officials notify the elections office staff about the impending end of the retention schedule. The elections office generally sends a staff member to observe the destruction. The elections office in Los Angeles, California incinerates the election materials. The one thing all of the jurisdictions have in common, however, is the requirement to document the disposal of election materials.

Election officials agree that consistency is the key to records disposal. Unless a need exists to retain records for longer than the time specified in the retention schedule, such as an ongoing legal dispute, the disposal of records should not be delayed beyond the date required by the retention schedule. Selectively adhering to the retention schedule might give the appearance of impropriety. For example, questions may arise, including why were ballots retained from one election longer than the ballots from a different election?

Notwithstanding Federal and State laws on records retention for election materials, election officials should keep financial records relating to election administration for longer periods, if possible, to aid in documenting maintenance of effort (MOE) and for audit purposes.

### *tip*

Election officials should follow the records retention procedures exactly (unless an ongoing legal dispute exists) and dispose of the documents and electronic media as outlined in law or in the jurisdiction's policies and procedures document.

### Preparing for an Election

Election officials retain full responsibility for effectively managing a government agency on top of the unique task of coordinating a jurisdiction-wide event with many moving parts. Although many government agencies can plan activities year to year, elections offices are tied more to a 4-year cycle of planning while still being prepared to administer an unexpected special election with little notice.

The responsibilities and needs of the elections office vary from year to year based on several factors, many of which are outside the control of election officials. For example, an elections office may administer three elections one year and only one

election the following year. Special elections usually occur with little warning or time for preparation. To handle this varying schedule of elections, most elections offices use an election calendar.

## The Election Calendar

Each election has a project start date and an end date. These dates represent the beginning of the election cycle through the certification of results. The election calendar is similar to any project management timeline and will help election officials keep track of important tasks. Examples of events and tasks that might appear in an elections calendar include securing polling places, proofing and printing ballots, mailing out absentee ballots,

opening early voting locations, hiring and training poll workers, preparation and distribution of supplies, canvassing votes, and certifying the election. Certainly, elections offices should include many other detailed tasks and events to their election calendars as warranted.

Many election calendars include citations to State code next to each task that appears in the calendar. The purpose for citing State code is to justify the reason for performing an activity at a given time, such as the first and last days on which vote-by-mail or absentee ballots can be received in the elections office.

Many election tasks cannot be started until the preceding task is complete. The contingent tasks

Colorado Secretary of State		2009 Election Calendar	Coordinated Election: November 3, 2009
<u><b>JANUARY</b></u>			
1-Jan. Thu.	Earliest day to apply for a mail-in ballot for an election in 2009. The application shall be accepted and filed no earlier than January 1, 2009. (Exception for absent uniformed services elector, a nonresident overseas elector, or a resident overseas elector, as defined in section 1-2-208, or applicants who have requested to be on the Permanent Mail-In Voter list.)	1-8-104(3); 1-8-104.5; 1-8-103.5(1.5)	
7-Jan. Wed.	General Assembly to convene 2009 regular session. (10 A.M., no later than the 2nd Wednesday in January of each year.)	Art. V, Sect. 7	
12-Jan. Mon.	Last day for state office holders/appointees to file personal financial disclosures, or update form.	24-6-202(4); 1-1-106(4)	
15-Jan. Thu.	Last day to file 2008 4th Qtr. gifts & honoraria reports for all public office holders & judges.	24-6-203(2)	
15-Jan. Thu.	2008 Annual Contribution & Expenditure report due for all state candidate committees not active in the 2008 Primary/General. (Reporting period 01/01/08 - 12/31/08)	1-45-108(2)(d); CPF Rule 5.10	
15-Jan. Thu.	2008 4th Qtr. Contribution & Expenditure reports for all state committees not active in the 2008 Primary/General Election. (Reporting period 10/01/08-12/31/08)	1-45-108(2)(a)(I)(A); CPF Rule 5.1, 5.6	
<u><b>FEBRUARY</b></u>			
2-Feb. Mon.	The County Clerk shall furnish to the county chairpersons of the two major political parties a list containing the names, addresses, precinct numbers, and party affiliations of the electors whose names were canceled from the registration record (no later than 90 days following any general election.)	1-2-605(8)	
<u><b>MARCH</b></u>			
2-Mar. Mon.	The Secretary of State shall distribute to each major and minor political party, free of charge, a list of individuals who actually voted in the election. (No later than March 1 of each year following a year in which a general election was held.)	1-2-305(4); SOS Rule 3.9, 3.10; 1-1-106(4)	
<u><b>APRIL</b></u>			
15-Apr. Wed.	Last day to file 2009 1st Qtr. gifts & honoraria reports for all public office holders & judges.	24-6-203(2)	
15-Apr. Wed.	2009 1st Qtr. Contributions & Expenditures report for state committees who are not active in the 2009 Coordinated election. (Reporting period 01/01/09 - 03/31/09). Committees that were active in the 2008 General Election have a reporting period of 12/1/08 - 3/31/09.	1-45-108(2)(a)(I)(A); CPF Rule 5.1, 5.6	
<u><b>MAY</b></u>			
1-May Fri.	Monthly Contributions & Expenditures report due for state issue committees with issues on the 2009 Coordinated election ballot. (Reporting period 01/01/09-04/25/09)	1-45-108(2)(a)(I)(C); SOS Rule 5.2, 5.6	
6-May Wed.	The General Assembly must adjourn no later than this date. (Regular sessions shall not exceed 120 calendar days.)	Art. V, Sect. 7	

This 2009 election calendar released by the Colorado Secretary of State's office includes both start and end dates for all tasks. The calendar includes a citation to State code to justify the tasks on the calendar.



should be clearly noted in the election calendar. For example, absentee ballots cannot be mailed to voters until they are designed, printed, and delivered to the elections office. Election officials might assign a key staff member to monitor the progress of calendar events to ensure that critical tasks do not fall behind schedule and affect the elections office's ability to complete contingent tasks.

The internal office election calendar can include notations of specific staff member responsibilities. Election officials may also assign both primary and secondary responsibilities to staffers. In the event that the staff member with primary responsibility cannot complete the given task, a second staff member can ensure that key milestones are met. This redundancy helps to ensure that all events on the calendar are completed in a timely manner.

### Project Management

Election officials use different processes to track staff's completion of deliverables. For example, some elections offices automate staff responsibilities. When an employee comes into the elections office in the morning, the office's project management software provides a list of tasks past due, due, and due in the near future. This list helps staff meet key deliverables on time. The critical events are highlighted and the calendar can be printed out for each individual's tasks, supervisor's tasks, and manager's responsibilities. If tasks are not signed off on time, supervisors are notified until, eventually, the chief election official is notified.

Election project management becomes more intense during the weeks leading up to early voting and Election Day. Full-time staff members are often working long hours in order to accomplish required tasks. Many jurisdictions use statistical data on a daily basis to monitor workflow, to review the number of absentee and early voters, and to respond to staff and voter needs. The need to reach key milestones may translate into a need for additional part-time employees. These employees are used to perform data entry, answer phones, manage incoming and outgoing absentee ballots, etc.

Finally, all election preparation should include contingencies in the event of a natural disaster or other disruption to election activities. Election officials might consider responses to conceivable scenarios that might occur during the election in

order to be prepared well ahead of time. Conceivable challenges include a shortage of ballots at the polls, polling places that are inaccessible on Election Day, poll workers who fail to arrive on time, power failures, road closures, and sudden changes in weather conditions. For a complete description of contingency planning, see chapter 11 of the Election Management Guidelines, *Contingency Planning and Change Management*.

### Staffing

Elections offices are established in different ways based on State law. In some jurisdictions, elections offices have two bipartisan directors and a full-time nonpartisan staff. Other elections offices have a full-time nonpartisan staff that is subject to an appointed or elected electoral board. In any configuration, election officials will need to hire, train, manage, and retain a motivated staff in order to successfully administer elections.

### Recruiting Staff

Working in elections administration means working a lot of hours, many of which can occur outside the normal government operating hours. Election officials point out four realities of working in an elections office about which potential hires might be made aware:

1. No vacations from October–December.
2. Lots of standing.
3. Moving equipment.
4. Long hours and overtime.

Job descriptions can note these unexpected tasks so that potential employees have an accurate picture of what working at an elections office entails.

### Managing Staff

Having a common goal is the first step to managing a motivated staff. Together with the staff, an election official might consider developing a Mission Statement, staff competencies, and a list of core values for employees. Some examples include:

- ★ Establishing initiatives that “[s]eek better ways to provide services to encourage all eligible residents to exercise their right to vote. Conduct elections in a fair, accurate and efficient manner. Maintain a continuous professional level of service to the public. Develop new techniques to improve outreach services that acknowledge the diversity

of Alameda County.” Source: Alameda County, California Registrar of Voters, Mission Statement.

- ★ “Serving the public by administering the election process and promoting voter participation.” Source: Johnson County, Kansas Election Office, Mission Statement.
- ★ Examples of staff competencies: integrity, honesty, and impartiality; teamwork and cooperation; reliability and commitment; attention to detail and responsibility; flexibility; stress tolerance and stamina; ability to change and create; communications and public relations; election management.
- ★ Examples of core values: open communication, honest feedback, challenging the process, commitment to teamwork, delegation, customer focus, and recognition.

Second, each full-time position on the elections office staff might have an individual functional statement. Some election officials discuss the functional statement and then both the supervisor and employee sign it. A functional statement is similar to a job description; however, it provides a detailed listing of specific job duties required for the position. The functional statement should give an overview of the specific knowledge, skills, abilities, and responsibilities expected for an employee to be successful. The knowledge section can require the employee to have an understanding of various State and Federal election laws, local laws and policies, data entry software, and professional practices. The skills and abilities section might include the capacities to work well with others and to provide superior customer service to the voting public. The duties section would relate to the specific job requirements such as inputting registration information, answering phones, maintaining the voting systems, etc.

An example of a functional statement for the “election assistant” position used in Sacramento, California appears on the following pages.

Finally, because of limited staff resources, the best way to maximize staff output in the elections office is to encourage employees to learn all of the different aspects of managing an election. The election official might develop an office organizational chart to distribute to all employees that outlines the chain of command in the office. This chart helps employees see which employee has responsibility for different areas of administering elections and where their help might be most appreciated.

Election officials point out that, usually, only limited opportunities exist for the promotion of full-time employees in the elections office; this is especially the case in smaller elections offices. Election officials, however, can provide ongoing training opportunities and cross training to all staff members so that each employee becomes familiar with the process for providing voting access to the public. Election officials should empower employees to think outside of the box to develop solutions to challenges caused by the limited resources elections offices receive.

## Part-Time Employees

As Election Day approaches, the local elections office often becomes the largest governmental department in the jurisdiction. There will be part-time employees and many poll workers to recruit, train, and manage.

Some election officials use temp agencies to fill part-time job slots. These part-time employees generally perform data entry tasks associated with voter registration, process absentee ballots, and answer the voter information hotline as Election Days near. One benefit of using a temp agency to hire part-time staff includes reduced training costs, especially if the same temp employees are repeatedly assigned to the elections office.

Another potential pool of part-time employees exists that election officials may want to consider. If the elections office can implement a flexible work schedule—for example, not requiring a full 8 hours of work on a given day—they may be able to hire stay-at-home parents. These potential employees enjoy the ability to work for a few hours during the day while still being able to drop off and pick up children at school. Election officials noted that the timing of elections, often in the fall near the beginning of the holiday season, usually means that potential employees are looking to make extra money and are very willing to work at the elections office.

### tip

Stay-at-home mothers and fathers could come to work after the children are in school and leave early to pick their children up after school.



## COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS

### FUNCTIONAL STATEMENT

(Rev. 1/2005)

**Section:** Voter Services --Absentee

**Position Title:** Election Assistant

**Employee currently employed in this position:** Vacant

**Under the direction of:** Election Supervisor--Absentee

**Position Overview:** Specialized assistance with all aspects of absentee voting.

#### **Knowledge of:**

- Office practices and procedures.
- Basis provisions of the California Election Code, NVRA, California and other Federal laws, codes and regulations that govern the elections process, the registration of voters, absentee voting, and/or relating to voter registration, and the administration of elections.
- Data entry equipment and applications used in voter registration and elections.
- Elementary mathematics.
- Election Calendars.
- Completing nomination papers.
- Research of voting records.
- Campaign disclosure.
- Computer skills: Excel and Word or other computer programs to create letters and forms
- DFM software and systems to process absentee voters, enter and maintain voter records, scan affidavits and other related documents, and verify signatures on nomination documents.

#### **Ability to:**

- Read, understand, explain, and apply basic provisions of various California codes and regulations relating to the administration of elections, and registration of voters.
- File documents rapidly and accurately.
- Review and compare documents for completeness and accuracy.
- Work well with others.
- Communicate effectively orally and in writing.
- Speak English at a level for effective job performance.
- Disassemble, inspect, repair and reassemble voting equipment.
- Operate office equipment such as scanner, personal computer, microfiche readers, copier fax, inserter, folder, paper cutter, letter opener, laser printers, scanners and optical disk retrieval/storage systems.

**Duties:**

1. Process Absentee applications, from the mail or at the front counter.
2. Prepare ballot packages for mailing.
3. Verify signatures on return absentee envelopes and process ballots for counting.
4. Sort incoming mail for processing.
5. Set up ballot room.
6. Process 60-day, Military, Overseas, Permanent, Mail Ballot, New Citizens, and New Resident voters.
7. Answer phone inquiries from internal and external customers.
8. Assist in the Absentee Canvass including the accounting of used ballots, the destruction of unused ballots, and packing election material for storage and destruction.
9. Process affidavits of registration, cancel and correct voter records as required by the election code.
10. Correspond with voters to obtain information regarding voter registration and the absentee process.
11. Assist in the design and development of new processes and update procedures when laws change or changes in technology occur.
12. Assist with initiative, referendum, recall and nomination petitions.
13. Assist in the supervision of election night activities.
14. Train and supervise temporary employees. Monitor and check timesheets for accuracy and completeness.
15. Supervise a night shift when workload requires.
16. Proof election related materials and all correspondence
17. Maintain an accurate inventory and order sufficient quantities of forms, affidavits, envelopes and other items and equipment as needed.
18. Maintain historical election data.
19. Keep accurate records to ensure the timely destruction of election related materials.
20. Process the various reports generated during the absentee and election process.
21. Coordinate and participate in voter outreach activities as needed.
22. Know the requirements for processing a Fail-Safe voter.
23. Assist with the canvass including Provisional Ballots and processing the yes/no votes from the Roster Book.
24. Help in other sections when required.
25. Be able to work well with others and independently.
26. Other duties as assigned.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Employee's Signature** **Date**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Supervisor's Signature** **Date**



## Facilities and Equipment Management

Election officials are generally responsible for the facilities that house their operations. Depending on the jurisdiction, those facilities might include the central (and perhaps satellite) elections office, a warehouse for voting equipment, and numerous polling places on Election Day. At these facilities, the elections office may be responsible for contracting for janitorial services, providing security, employees and equipment, managing utilities, and planning for continuity of operations.

Election officials might develop diagrams detailing the location of all equipment and material in each facility under their control. They can also prepare additional documentation to illustrate the security protocols in place to protect voting systems, ballots (voted and unvoted), and any other equipment. In the case of election technology, election officials can indicate which areas of the buildings they manage are climate controlled, and thus, are suitable for the storage of some voting systems.

Election officials can also create additional diagrams that outline the potential uses of a single room within a facility. These diagrams might include the rooms, in various staging configurations, involved in managing an election. For example, areas used to conduct poll worker training sessions might double as rooms for preparing absentee ballots, staging election equipment, or canvassing an election. The diagram can show the most efficient setup for the room in each configuration so that staff understands how to organize the area.

Elections office staff might review the diagrams after each election cycle to make necessary modifications. It is helpful to diagram the following facilities and to update them to achieve the most efficient configurations:

- ★ Early voting locations—setup of equipment, laptops, check-in areas, voter staging areas, secure voting area, entrance and exit, location of all signs, etc.
- ★ Poll worker supply check out and election night check-in areas.
- ★ Staging area for recounts, canvassing, research, provisional ballots, etc., including the work flow diagram for each task.
- ★ Outgoing and incoming mail ballot processing areas.

- ★ Each polling place within the jurisdiction— setup of equipment, laptops, check-in areas, voter staging areas, secure voting area, entrance and exit, location of all signs, etc.

Election officials can track equipment and supplies to maintain chain of custody in many ways. First, election officials can use paper based checklists. They use checklists when materials are moved from the elections office or warehouse to a polling place, for instance. Another common way election officials maintain equipment is through barcode scanning. Similar to using paper-based checklists, each piece of equipment has a barcode that is scanned when it enters and exits the elections office or warehouse. Election officials also have even newer technology-based systems to maintain the chain of custody and tracking of equipment and supplies. For a complete use description of these new technologies, including GPS and RFID chips, see chapter 17 of the Election Management Guidelines, *Technology in Elections*.

## Collection of Statistical Data and Budgeting

Many election officials view their budgets as based on a four-year election cycle. The four-year cycle is used because elections for almost all offices happen at least once in that period. While most governmental agency budgets are compared year-to-year, election officials stress the importance of comparing similar election years. For example, the budget for a Presidential election year should be compared to the previous Presidential election year. Election officials can use statistical data about voter turnout and elections office performance in the preparation for budgeting.

### Statistical Data

Statistics are important for planning, budgeting, and reporting requirements. They allow elections office staff to quantify the quality of service provided, evaluate internal accountability, and clarify long-term goals and objectives. Computer systems and software provide an easy way to collect statistics.

Data from past election cycles provide a good first step in developing pre-election plans for future elections. If they have flexibility in this area, election officials can use past turnout from similar elections to make projections for ballot orders, number of poll workers, number of polling places, number

of voting machines, voter registration, early voting and Election Day voters, etc. However, some States require jurisdictions to print a certain number of ballots or to have a certain number of poll workers regardless of past turnout or type of election. For example, Texas uses a formula to determine how many early voting sites should be open. Election officials can check with the State elections office to determine what, if any, requirements might pertain to their jurisdictions.

Election officials may be expected to provide estimated costs to the jurisdiction's budget authority before receiving their appropriations. Election officials can use statistics to determine these costs, including the cost per ballot cast, cost per polling place, cost per absentee/mail ballot voter, cost for poll worker recruitment, and other training costs.


### tip

Consider publishing the performance measures in budget requests, media packets, and annual reports.

## Budgeting

Many factors affect the preparation of a budget, such as the amount of control an election official has over his or her budget, the funding sources, and legislation.

Some election officials receive their elections office's budget as an appropriation from the jurisdiction's budget authority. The money comes from the general fund or some activity outside the control of the elections office. Some elections offices, however, are designed to fund the activities they administer. For example, in California, election officials are also the clerks and recorders for the jurisdiction. In the past, the fees generated by the recorder functions of the office provided sufficient funding to absorb the costs of special elections and new election administration mandates passed by the California legislature or Congress.



**Checklist: Cost of Elections**

<b>Labor: Items to be included in cost of an election</b>	
Permanent Employees	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Direct Labor (including premium pay)
Cost of Benefits (if paid)	
Insurance	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Health
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dental
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vision
<input type="checkbox"/>	Life
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disability
<input type="checkbox"/>	Worker's Compensation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Long-Term Care
<input type="checkbox"/>	Deferred compensation

The Election Center's checklist for the cost of elections.

Usages fees provide another funding source for elections offices. The elections office in Dallas, Texas, for example, provides smaller jurisdictions with election administration services. The fees include voting system rentals, mail ballot readers, and various computer programming. The jurisdiction can also charge the public for voter lists and other requests for information.

Finally, election officials might consider making contingency funding plans for their budgets. Jurisdictions differ about how to budget for potential special elections or recounts. Some elections offices include a contingency in their budget requests, but other jurisdictions have unexpected events covered by a separate fund or their general fund. In Sacramento, California, the county budget authority reserves money in a countywide contingency fund that the elections office can use in the event of a special election or recount.

## Conclusion

Many elections offices conduct jurisdiction-wide events with limited resources. Election officials and their staffs have many responsibilities that are unique to public administration. By relying on good management of policies and procedures, forward-thinking planning of election calendars, smart hiring and cross training of staff, and innovative use of statistics and budgeting, election officials can successfully administer elections for their constituents.